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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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FOR AF/C, PARIS AND LONDON FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LY](#) [GB](#) [BN](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: PEACE ACCORDS MULTIPLY WITH FRINGE CHAD REBEL
GROUPS

REF: A. NDJAMENA 751

[1](#)B. COTONOU 779

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. Five minor Chadian rebel/exile groups have signed generic peace agreements with the Government of Chad (GOC) in the last two weeks. The agreements include amnesty for rebels and a commitment to integrate rebel forces into the Chadian army and civil service. Negotiations in Tripoli with the two major rebel groups belonging to Mahamat Nouri and Timan Erdimi appear to be making headway, but are not as advanced. Local commentators are deeply skeptical of the trustworthiness of any party to these agreements, and believe that it is only a matter of time before new challenges to the regime will arise. End summary.

SIGNING CEREMONY IN NDJAMENA MARKS PEACE WITH ARAB GROUP

[1](#)2. (U) On October 1, the diplomatic community was invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to witness the signing of a peace agreement between the Government of Chad (represented by Minister of Infrastructure Adam Younousmi) and Ali Ahmat Akbach, President of the CDRT (Chadian Democratic and Revolutionary Council). (Comment: the CDRT is a Rachid Arab group based in Batha whose origins date back to the early eighties. End comment.) Chadian Intelligence Chief Chaibo was also present on the podium. Libyan Foreign Minister Treiki witnessed the signing, and both parties acknowledged the support of Libyan mediation in reaching the agreement. The twelve articles of the accord call for a cease-fire, exchange of prisoners, a general amnesty and for the cantonment and disarmament of CDRT forces (said to number some 100). The CDRT is free to become a recognized political party if it wishes, and CDR cadres are to be integrated into the Chadian army or civil service. Minister Younousmi was fulsome in his praise of Libyan President Ghaddafi and Libya's efforts to assist Chadian national reconciliation.

CONFLICTING REPORTS OF AGREEMENTS IN TRIPOLI

[1](#)3. (U) Two days later an agreement was reported on Radio France International (RFI) between the Government and four rebel groups in Tripoli: RFC, CNT, UFDD and UFDD Fondamentale. Of these four, however, only UFDD Fondamentale (led by Arab leader and former Ambassador to the United States Acheikh Ibn Oumar) hewed to the government line that a decisive peace agreement had been signed. In subsequent

reports the "signature" was downgraded to "initialing;" the agreement itself was apparently only for a three week cease-fire during which time negotiations would take place. UFDD leader Mahamat Nouri (former Defense Minister) told the media that "the struggle still continues." RFC leader Timan Erdimi told RFI that what had been agreed was the "principle of reconciliation and durable peace." He added, "the details still need to be worked out." As reported in Reftel A, the question of disarmament appears to be the most contentious, although the number and level of ministerial appointments is also considered to be an important point of discussion between the rebels and the government delegation.

BENIN GROUP SIGNS - LIBREVILLE NEXT?

14. (U) On October 10 agreement was reached between the Government of Chad and four minor exile groups (RDT, UPTRN, ANR and GPI) based in Benin (Reftel B). Senior Chadian Minister Haroun Kabadi (currently Minister of Agriculture, formerly Coordinator of the National Petroleum Office) led the negotiation. The agreement followed the same format as that used for the CDRT. Separate negotiations are reported to be ongoing with additional groups in Libreville, Gabon, under the purview of former Chadian President Goukouni Weddeye.

N'DJAMENA RUMOR MILLS RUN ON NOUR

15. (SBU) Meanwhile, speculation on the status of the January 2007 agreement between the GOC and FUC rebel leader Mahamat Nour keeps the N'Djamena rumor mills working. Given the unveiled ambition of (now) Defense Minister Nour, the off-and-on difficulties in integrating FUC troops in the Chadian army (ANT), and the continuing spikes in conflict

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between Tama and Zaghawa in the Guereda region, most Chadians think it is only a matter of time before Nour and President Deby have a falling out. The disposition of FUC troops loyal to Nour is a source of constant comment (and concern). Last month rumors circulated that Nour's house had been taken over; this week the rumor is that he was poisoned and had to be medevaced to France. In an RFI radio broadcast on October 12 Nour denied that he had been poisoned, and said that his relationship with President Deby was fine (although he could not say the same thing for some of Deby's close advisers.) He said that he hoped to return to Chad soon.

COMMENT

16. (SBU) With the exception of Nouri and Erdimi, the groups that have signed peace agreements are marginal and do not represent a serious threat. However, it is also acknowledged that Nouri and Erdimi seem to be moving faster towards some kind of reconciliation than most observers thought possible, given the deep enmity and profound lack of trust between these individuals and President Deby.

17. (SBU) What is striking is the lack of confidence that the average Chadian feels in the stability which external observers consider the country to have enjoyed since January 2007. Local commentators scoff at the appearances of "peace breaking out." Most view the accords with the armed opposition as a "show" and consider all parties - on the government side as well as the rebel side - to be chronically untrustworthy. The most jaundiced observers view the agreement reached August 13 with the political opposition as a cynical "selling out" by opposition politicians who were willing to exchange their integrity for another shot at government positions.

18. (SBU) That being said, those citizens with a grievance are rapidly finding their mouthpieces vanishing as group after group puts down their weapons (real or figurative) and comes in from the cold. Is it just a matter of time before a new group springs up to protest what is perceived to be the widespread corruption and relentlessly autocratic governance

of the Deby regime?

19. Minimized considered.
TAMLYN